

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DAMASC 03325 090919Z
ACTION NEA-11

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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
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AMEMBASSY CAIRO
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AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USMISSION USUN

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PORG, PBOR, PEPR, SY, LE, IS, UNSC
SUBJ: SYRIAN VIEWS ON SOUTH LEBANON

1. DURING DISCUSSION WITH CHARGE JUNE 8, PRESIDENTIAL POLITICAL ADVISOR DAOUDY HAD LITTLE TO ADD TO OUR KNOWLEDGE OF ASSAD-SARKIS MEETING OR DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH LEBANON. DAOUDY DESCRIBED SYRIA'S ROLE IN LEBANON TODAY AS TWO-FOLD; FIRST, TO HELP PRESIDENT SARKIS MAINTAIN ORDER AND RESTORE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY, AND SECOND, TO MEDIATE BETWEEN LEBANESE AND PALESTINIANS. HE DESCRIBED LATAKIA MEETING BETWEEN ASSAD AND SARKIS AS A GOOD, GENERAL DISCUSSION BETWEEN TWO PRESIDENTS WHICH CLEARED THE AIR OF POSSIBLE MISUNDERSTANDINGS AND AMBIGUITIES. BOTH HAD AGREED THAT THEY SHOULD FULLY SUPPORT UNIFIL IN ITS ROLE IN SOUTH LEBANON AND ASSAD HAD GIVEN A GENERAL PLEDGE OF SUPPORT TO SARKIS. THE TWO PRESIDENTS HAD DISCUSSED SENDING LEBANESE ARMY UNITS TO SOUTH LEBANON AFTER ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL BUT HAD NOT DISCUSSED MODALITIES. I PROBED THIS ISSUE FURTHER POINTING OUT THAT IS

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 DAMASC 03325 090919Z

WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO INSTALL LEBANESE TROOPS IN SOUTH AND TO SUPPLY THEM WITHOUT HAVING A TRANSIT CORRIDOR UNDER LEBANESE CONTROL. THIS MIGHT BE DONE EITHER BY MOVING ADF SOUTH AT SOME POINT OR UNIFIL NORTH TO CREATE A CONTROLLED PASSAGEWAY OR BY HELPING LEBANESE THEMSELVES OPEN SUCH A CORRIDOR BUT I DOUBTED THAT PALESTINIANS COULD BE RELIED ON TO ASSURE UNOBSTRUCTED LAF PASSAGE, PARTICULARLY

IN LIGHT OF ATTITUDE OF HABBASH AND ALF AND CONTINUED IRAQI PRESENCE IN THIS ZONE. DAOUDY ACKNOWLEDGED HABBASH AND ALF COULD POSE PROBLEM AND THAT IRAQIS MIGHT ATTEMPT TO RAISE TENSION IN LEBANON IN ORDER TO DRAW ATTENTION AWAY FROM THEIR INTERNAL SITUATION. HE BELIEVED, HOWEVER, THAT ARAFAT WOULD BE COOPERATIVE REGARDING PASSAGE OF LEBANESE FORCES. HE SAID THAT SO FAR AS HE KNW ASSAD AND SARKIS HAD NOT DISCUSSED SUCH DETAILS.

2. DAOUDY DOUBTED THAT ADF FORCES WOULD DEPLOY SOUTHWARD TO THE LITANI FOR TWO REASONE, FIRST, SUCH A MOVE COULD BE INTERPRETED AS A EFFORT TO RESTRICT PALESTINIAN ACTION AND THUS AS ACTING ON BEHALF OF ISRAEL. SECOND, ISRAEL HAD SPECIFICALLY OPPOSED ANY FURTHER SOUTHWARD MOVEMENT OF ADF TROOPS IN THE PAST. COMMENT: DAOUDY HERE RECALLED WITH SOME BITTERNESS PAST SYRIAN-US EXCHANGES ON THIS SUBJECT. I HAD THE IMPRESSION HE WOULD NOT WANT TO GO GHROUGH THIS PROSSESS AGAIN, I.E., THE PROCESS OF GETTING ISRAEL'S REACTION THROUGH USG FOR A SOUTHWARD DEPLOYMENT OF ADF AND THIS IN ITSELF MIGHT BE AN IMPORTANT FACTOR WEIGHING AGAINST SUCH A MOVE.)

3. ON THE QUESTION OF HOW TO HANDLE MAJOR HADDAD, DAOUDY TOOK POSITION THAT HE WAS A CRIMINAL BUT SAID PRESIDENT SARKIS HAD TO FIND A WAY TO DEAL WITH HIM. HE DISCOUNTED POSSIBILITY THAT HADDAD MIGHT BE BROUGHT TO SYRIA FOR CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 DAMASC 03325 090919Z

"RETRAINING", POINTING OUT THAT SUCH A MOVE WOULD HARDLY BE ACCEPTABLE TO THE LEBANESE FRONT.

4. RE TUENI'S SUGGESTION USUN 2357 THAT WE AGAIN URGE SYRIA TO CONTINUE TO BE HELPFUL IN ITS EXCHANGES WITH THE GOL AND PALESTINIANS, I RECOMMEND WE HOLD OFF UNTIL AFGER ISRAELIS HAVE WITHDRAWN SINCE NO ACTION BY SYRIANS OR LEBANESE WAS CONTEMPLATED BEFORE THEN IN ANY CASE. SYRIANS ARE IN DO DOUBT REGARDING US POSITION AND REPORTING FROM VARIOUS SOURCES INDICATES SYRIANS ARE URGING PALESTINIAN COOPERATION.
PELLETREAU

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